

REMARKS

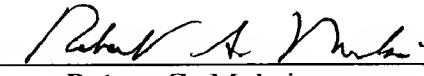
By the present Amendment, the only rejected claims (i.e., claims 4 and 11) have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claim 15 has been amended so as to be placed in independent form and to address the points raised in the Advisory Action dated December 10, 2003. The Amendment thereby results in the presence of only allowed claims and applicants therefore request reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

As an additional matter, applicants respectfully request consideration and acknowledgment of the First Information Disclosure Statement filed on July 24, 2003, the Second Information Disclosure Statement filed on December 9, 2003, and the Third Information Disclosure Statement concurrently filed herewith in the next Official Action.

Should the Examiner wish to discuss any aspect of the present application, she is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 
Robert G. Mukai
Registration No. 28,531

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

Date: January 7, 2004